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Friday. Jan. 4th

How odd to think that I have given the world something that the world enjoys — I refer to the Manchester Guardian — Orlando is recognised for the masterpiece that it is. The Times does not mention Nessa's pictures. Yet, she said last night, I have spent a long time over one of them. Then I think to myself, So I have something, instead of children, & fall comparing our lives. I note my own withdrawal from those desires; my absorption in what I call, inaccurately, ideas: this vision.

We saw Koteliansky on Christmas day. Rather dryer & yellower in the cheeks, like an orange that is old. He was in his shirtsleeves. He had been washing up his Christmas dinner, which was "No, not a very good one".. Come in Come in" It is poverty. This was Katherine's room he said. It looks over [illegible], tidy, clean & a bed, a table. It looks over back gardens to the trees of Regents Park. We went straight into the old abuse of Murry: went back ten years, to Richmond, & those long visits; those difficult emphatic ways. He is one says, the same. Very poor, as definite as ever. Still talking about Lawrence; a very very good writer but this last book DISGUSTING. Why? Because he is a serious man, a cultivated man. And this You must read [illegible].

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typical of the age. His a painful but an honest book. But still Kot. Stuck the same reverences & concentration upon the same objects which he has been staring at these 40 years. Still he gnaws the bone of Katherine & Mary. And all the time some emotion was working in him. He was glad we had come. What could he give us? He gave me a red wooden box, a Russian toy, & stuffed it full of his Russian cigarettes. His voice quivered now & then. He looked at me with emotion. All the windows was shining, where he had cleaned it; & he had painted the woodwork with two sorts of [illegible] blue: so that it shone very bright. He had painted it over & over. Then he loves, how heaven knows. His people will no longer buy his translations. His Dog (a pure Jewish dog) is dead.

Is life very solid, or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever: will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world — this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves. Perhaps it may be that though we change; one flying after another, so quick so quick, yet we are somehow successive, & continuous — we human beings; & show the light through. But what is the light? I am impressed by the transitoriness of human life to such an extent that I am often saying a ~~[illegible]~~ farewell — after dining with Roger for instance; or reckoning how many more times I shall see Nessa.

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Thursday 28th March. 1929

This is a disgrace indeed: no diary has been left so late in the year. The truth was that we went to Berlin on the 16th of January, & then I was in bed for three weeks afterwards, & then could not write, perhaps for another three, & have spent my energy since in one of my excited outbursts of composition — writing what I made up in bed, a final version of Women & Fiction.

And as usual, I am bored by narrative. I want only to say how I met Nessa in Tottenham Court Road this afternoon, both of us sunk fathoms deep in that wash of reflection in which we both swim about. She will be gone on Wednesday for 4 months. This is queer how instead of drawing apart, life draws us together. But I was thinking a thousand things as I carried my teapot, gramophone records & stockings under my arm. This is one of those days that I called 'potent' when we lived in Richmond. Perhaps I ought not to go on repeating what I have always said about the spring. One ought perhaps to be forever finding new things to say, since life draws on. One ought to invent a fine narrative style. Certainly there are many new ideas always forming in my head. For one, that I am

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going to enter a nunnery these next months; & let myself down into my mind; Bloomsbury being done with. I am going to face certain things. It is going to be a time of adventure & attack, rather lonely & painful I think. But solitude will be good for a new book. Of course, I shall make friends. I shall be external outwardly. I shall buy some good clothes & go out into new houses. All the time I shall attack this angular shape in my mind. I think The Moths (if that is what I shall call it) will be very sharply cornered. I am not satisfied though with the frame. There is this sudden fertility which may be mere fluency. In old days books were so many sentences absolutely struck with an axe out of crystal: & now my mind is so impatient, so quick, in some ways so desperate.

Old age is withering us; Clive, Sibyl, Francis — all wrinkled & dusty; going over the hooks, along the track. Only in myself, I say, for ever bubbles this impetuous torrent. So that even if I see ugliness in the glass, I think, very well, inwardly I am more full of shape & colour than ever. I think I am bolder as a writer. I am alarmed by my own cruelty with my friends. Clive, say, is intolerably dull. Francis is a runaway milk lorry. I feel on the verge of some strenuous ~~old~~ adventure: yes; as if this spring day were the hatching: the portal: the opening through

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which I shall go upon this experience. So when I wake early, I brace myself against my terrors by saying that I shall need great courage: aplenty. Nay, I made £1000 all from writing it early one morning. No more poverty I said; & poverty has ceased. I am summoning Philcox next week to plan a room — I have money to build it, money to furnish it. And we have the new car, & we can drive to Edinburgh in June if we like, & go to Cassis.

The new year was threatened with a pumping machine making this studio a treat; for it pumped every 25 minutes. Now for a fortnight it has not pumped. Am I saved? Now it is so quiet that I only hear sparrows, & a voice singing in the hotel. A perfect room for me. Nessa has taken a studio & will let 37. Thus ending, for ever perhaps, her Gordon Square life. How much I admire this handling of life as if it were a thing one could throw about; this handling of circumstance. Angelica will go to school. I have now many admiring letters to answer. Simpkins said today that many great publishers would be proud to have our list. In 10 years we shall be rather celebrated. At any rate, without any trouble to write well, as there should have been. Thus once more launched this diary.

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April 13th

Habits gradually change the face of one's life, as time changes one's physical face; & one does not know it. Here am I using this studio to sit in, & writing my diary to write down here; almost always after tea I sit here; And then I never print now, or address envelopes. So perhaps habit will snuff out this diary one day. I am sordidly debating within myself the question of Nelly: the perennial question. This an absurdity, how much time L. & I have wasted in talking about servants. And it can never be done with because the fault lies in the system. How can an uneducated woman let loose in, alone, in to our lives? – what happens is that she becomes a mongrel; & has no roots anywhere. I could put my theory into practice by getting a daily of a civilised kind, who had her baby in Kentish town; & treated me as an employer, not friend. Here is a fine rubbish heap left by our parents to be swept.

This very quiet & very cold. I walked further through the Islington street this afternoon & was woken to the fact that this is April by a primrose on the pavement. I had been thinking I was on one of my January walks, with lights lit at 3.30 in peoples bedrooms. Rodmell was impracticable because of the cold; & until I have a room, I cannot go there meaning to work.

We always do mean to work.

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I have just agreed to do another 4 articles for Mrs Van Doren, because she has raised her price to £50 an article — so that, whatever the cost, I can have my new room. And all this money is changing my habits. I'm not sure this is not the memorable fact about this spring — for the first time since 1912 — 16 years that is — I ~~have been~~ am able to look in at blue little cups in a shop & decide, well why not buy them? But they cost £6.. But then I am making over £1000 a year. I can make as much as I want. This little colloquy still takes place before I can unbend my old penurious muscles. But it is always better to buy than not buy I think.

Hugh Walpole was here the other day, from 4.30 to 7.15 alone, over the fire. The same uneasy talk as usual; brisk & breezy, hale, vain: & then this morbid Egotism is driven to scratch the same place over & over again — his own defects as a writer & how to remedy them, what they spring from; all mixed up with his ~~less~~ normal, & usual sense of being prosperous & admired — from which, as he

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admits when I ask him, he gets great pleasure. He wants indeed to protest that he gives pleasure, dear God, but can't bring that out in my presence: which is why he seeks my presence — a scratching stone to rid him of the world's mud. He protests too much. On the other hand, I like these bristling vigorous characters: I like talk of ~~Rom~~ Russia, & war & great doings & famous people — If I don't see them I romanticise them.

Leonard is upstairs finishing the Hogarth Press accounts. Yesterday he gave the three staff hands a bonus: on C £25: Belsher £20: Kennedy £20. ~~I~~ They sent up a bunch of roses later in the day. ~~We are now~~ For the first time we have made over £400 profit. And 7 people now depend on us; & I think with pride that 7 people depend, largely, upon my hand writing on a sheet of paper. That is of course a great solace & pride to me. Its not scribbling: its keeping 7 people fed & housed. a great big man like Percy; a [illegible] woman like Cartwright: they live on my words. They will be feeding off Women & Fiction next year for which I predict some sale. It has considerable conviction. I think that the form, half talk half soliloquy allows me to get more onto the

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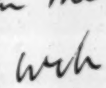
page than anywhere else. It made itself up & forced itself upon me (in this form—the thinking had been done & the writing stiffly & unsatisfactorily 4 times before) as I lay in bed after Berlin. I used to make it up at such a rate that when I got pen & paper I was like a water bottle turned upside down. The writing was as quick as my hand could write; too quick, for I am now tinkering to revise; but this way gives one freedom & lets one leap from back to back of one's thoughts.

Happily, in my health of soul, I am now very little noticed, & so can forget the stubborn self, for this half year; which I am sure makes up for one: I can see my famous self tapering about the world. I am more comfortable when shut up, self-contained as now.

The great pleasure of money is to spend a pound—or so on a dinner at Richmond—without accounting for it— I dined there with Vita. It was cold. We drove round the Park. I saw a man leading a large cat on a chain. I saw many odd parties in the hotel. How can they come here tonight, I said? There was the old woman gorged like a vulture. The woman with her foot cocked under the table at this  angle, all through dinner: the

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young spark in grey with the pink carnation: the two prominent-eyed daughters in velvet; & all kinds of emotions, of ~~be~~ undercurrent — silent crossing the vast room perpetually from one table to another. The waiter. Thought, are only here this one night: everything is unreal & will vanish. But this going on precisely the same at this moment. Have you had a tiring day Miss —? says Mrs — leaning out to speak to her. Oh dreadfully tiring says Miss — taking her seat at the table with the reserved private bottle of soda water. And in complete desolation she waits for the course to be brought.

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Monday April 29th

And this spring. Oh this cold spring! Dry as a bone, though cold today, but scarcely never a blue sky. So that my red coat, which is like haws in winter, suits it. I heard the nightingale at Vita's a week or two ago — the one warm night. And we were cold at Rodmell last week, when we went down to see Philcox, who will build two rooms for £320, & take only two months. It was cold; but how silent, how safe from voices & talk! How I resented our coming back; & quickly changed into the social sphere of my soul; & went to lunch with Sibyl; & there had, for my harm, precisely six minutes of tolerable talk with Max Beerbohm — But dear me, how little talk with great men now disturbs me. Are we all chilling & freezing, & do we look into each others old faces as into the craters of the moon? [These I saw silver white & like the spots that are made by water dropping into plaster of paris at through Vita's telescope the other day.] I begin to think that youth is the only tolerable thing to look at; & am taking Judy to the Coliseum on Wednesday.

I forgot to say that the pump has begun again & is grinding away at this moment. But I say I shall get used to it — certainly I shall.

This morning I began to revise Phases of Fiction, & with that done, I can see my way clear to a complete imaginative book.

Meanwhile, I am eddying quicker & quicker into

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the stream, into London: tomorrow Christabel; then Mauron lecture: Mary & the Keynes' & the Eliots.

Poor Tom — a true poet, I think; what they will call in a hundred years a man of genius: & this is his life. I stand for half an hour listening while he says that Vivien cant walk. Her legs have gone. But whats the matter? no one knows. And so she lies in bed — cant put her shoes on. And they have difficulties, humiliations, with servants. And after endless quibbling about visiting — which he cant do these 8 weeks, owing to moving house & 15 first cousins come to England, suddenly he appears overcome, moved, piqué, unhappy, broken down, because I offer to come to tea on Thursday. Oh but we dont dare ask our friends, he said — we have been deserted. Nobody has been to see us for weeks. Would you really come — all this way? to see us? Yes I said. But what a vision of misery, imagined, but real too. Vivien with her foot on a stool, in bed all day; Tom hurrying back to look after her: this is our man of genius. — This is what I gathered yesterday morning on the telephone.

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Sunday 12th May

Here, having just finished what I call the final revision of Women & Fiction so that L. can read it after tea, I stop: surfeited. And the pump, which I was so sanguine as to think ceased, begins again. About W. & F. I am not sure — a brilliant essay? — I daresay: it has much work in it, many opinions boiled down into a kind of jelly, which I have stained red as far as I can. But I am eager to be off — to write without any boundary coming slick in ones eyes: here my public has been too close: facts; getting them malleable, easily yielding to each other.

A wet day, or we should be at Hampton Court with Roger & Mauron. And I am glad of the rain, because I have talked too much. We have seen too many people — Sydney Waterlow perhaps the most notable, as a resurrection. A desperate bad looking pompous sad unhealable elderly man: very worldly: but quivering as usual in his shell. Any pin ~~be~~ pricks him in the unarmoured skin. I liked him. We met in the dark hall, glad of the darkness. We talked almost too easily, of Lucy Clifford bored with a review; & then his lancers & state at Bangkok — all very dear to him. to his liking. His importance very. Cut Dare he is nobody. And so he would like to go back to Bangkok & be important in the East for ever. He can seek the truth no more — has indeed seen through the search for truth, which was in him the search

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for power. He believes in nothing any more, he said, & is convinced now that nothing will ever change him — So, talking of something else for a moment, he suddenly burst out into a terrific peroration about Spengler, who has changed the world for him — made infinitely more difference than anybody — so fixed & stable & independent is he.

Also we had a party: Roger a little old-tongued mind he needs Nessa to fertilise & sweeten him. Some queer rancour often seems to exacerbate him. When his stomach heals his leg aches. And Plomer came — a little rigid, I fear: a too much of a gentleman: a little Blunden, the very image of a London house sparrow, that pecks & cheeps & is starved & dirty. And Julian, to me a very satisfactory young man at present; full of ardour, yet clear, precise; & genial too — with all his apostolic fervour & abstractedness a good fellow, warm kindly; much more apt to see the good than the bad. For example he thought poor little grey mouse Jenkins very nice & very intelligent & sat screwed up on the floor at her feet. He had been consoling Topsy all the afternoon. For Topsy & Peter have separated. Yes they have separated for ever, owing to her flirtatious ways.

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Monday ~~1st~~ May 13th

How odd this is—here I am sitting at 3.10 with nothing much to do—nothing that I need do. I must take up painting again. But we have been to the Singers with the car—its clutch in trouble; & as we started, up came Saxon, on his holiday—going to the City of course, & having a day off. For how many years has he done this—strange methodical character that he is. We dont meet for months, & take up the subject again. He took out his cheque book & said he thought the pattern was changed, with the same interest in that minute detail as he had 30 years ago. He has the same umbrella hanging by a hook on his arm: the same gold watch chain; & his pirouetting attitudes; & sprightly bird-like ways. What then has life given you, I asked, (inwardly) looking at the Church at the top of Portland Street. Well, he is free to go to the Opera, to read Plato to play chess. And he will continue doing these things, as if they were the chosen things till he dies. There is a certain dignity in this steady doing of things which seem chosen. Yet—there are always ends a comparison of lives—I wouldnt for the whole world live yours.

And at 4 I must change & wash & go to the Mauron lecture at Argyll House: & then to Molly & then to dine with Sibyl—which will, I hope finish this lap of my race.

Did I say that I shall think of

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life as a series of laps — & shall take my fences dutifully & then enjoy nothingness? So if I dine with Sibyl I need not dine with Christabel. I have never got in the frame of mind which makes these fences negligible. Then we go to Rodmell for 6 days: & then home; & then to Cassis; & then home. & then Rodmell; & then the autumn; & then the winter — Oh this pump! I wish I could say I never notice it. Moreover, the idea has come to me that I ought now to be re-reading my own books, for our 'Collected Edition' L. & Kennedy are working at a dust cover this moment. Shall I run away from my duty & the pump & go & see? The Election draws near, & the Derby. I will go upstairs & read Proust I think, since I am fabricating a few remarks on him for that cursed book — that stone that plunges me deeper & deeper in the water. The reason I dislike dining with Sibyl is that she wants it: what I am to give her a display of intimacy. which she cannot acquire, poor woman, for herself.

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May 15th

This is written, as many pages in the past used to be written, to try a new pen; for I am vacillating – cant be sure to stick to the old pen anymore. And then every gold pen has some fatal drawback. Never have I met one without. And then one cant be sure till one's written a long screed. And then one's ashamed to go back – & then one does – & then it all begins again, like Mathew Arnolds river, or sea [brings in again &c &c]

I make a note here that I will one of these days read the whole of Matthew Arnold.

I went to Sibyl Sibyls dinner; but Heavens, how little real point there is to these meetings – how rare indeed that the food is good; & there is wine, & a certain atmosphere of luxury & hospitality. This on the other hand, tends to drug one; one has been given something, for which one has to pay. And I dont like that feeling. The old white haired baby sat propped up on his high chair; his hair was white like flax, like silk; his cheeks tinted a child's pink; his eyes with their marble hardness; his toneless ineffective hands. For some reason, he heard me compliments, indeed referred to me as an authority on English; & even offered, which I daresay was kindly meant, though nothing has happened, to send me one of his books.

What did we discuss? Mostly himself & his books, I think; & how he had known various old dim figures, far away in the past. I told them about Lord

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Alfred's threat, & then launched him on stories about
Bobbie Ross, & his own ~~the~~ lawsuit. But he is a
detached shrewd old man; without many illusions
& not very dependent on anyone, I should say.
He wanted to walk back to Ebury Street, which
was raining & they made him take a cab.
He talked about Henry James, & a proof sheet
which nobody could read; & he said that a
sentence ought to form like a cloud at the
end of the pen — don't you think so? he said to me.
These little compliments were due to my
Geraldine & Jane which he said was an admirable
story & should be published as such. It had
nothing to do with fact. And I rather think
he will die soon — he has to have another
operation; but in his detached way. I think
these artists are slightly bored by all physical
transactions. Let my body die, I can imagine
him saying, so long as I can go on forming
sentences at the end of my pen — & why not?
Save that of course he says he enjoys the pleasures
of the body. But that I rather doubt.
And I doubt too if Clive does — Clive is I
fancy in bad odour everywhere at the moment,
with his silly egotistic ways — writing to me
to boast of a 'mystery', which it is clear
that I am to impart; but I shan't.
He is like Lottie au fond; & Lottie
by the way is dismissed; & is sad

subpoenas,

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to owe Karin £5 which she cant pay, & great scenes take place, poor Adrian, as I imagine, moping & glooming in discomfort alone; with Karin savage & violent & competent spasmodically, running out to pay bills & put her house in order in ten minutes when she has neglected it all these years: sordid & squalid it all is, & hardly gives me any pleasure, to tell the truth, these sufferings of my friends.

I am depressed. Brace has done it. The oval faced sallow man. They want to keep W & F, which is like till the spring, & make P. of F. come out this autumn—a book I hate; & was, as I think, wrongly pressed to undertake. And then Roger wants to come to Rodmell, & I dont like after my protests, to say no; & yet to have to talk & talk—& then Philcox cant get my rooms done, all because of Dawrants long waiting. So my wheel is turning low. & do I like this hen, or dont I? Such are my sorrows Mr Wesley, as the man said when the servant put on too many coals.

What Clive says is that he has a mystery; something he cant share: & this annoys me too; the sensation mongering, like Dotty's; the desire to be talked of: Oh, I say, if only I could plunge my mind into the delights of pure imagination, & so get some pull on this hoarded world of real life!

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But I must somehow wind up this account of flies in the eye & go up to dinner & try to think of some cause of pleasure with Leonard. Something ~~[illegible]~~ cheerful. Oh but then I must grind on at Flush, I suppose; & then copy out passage. Never mind. I will try my new pen & see if that doesn't cheer me. Because clearly these miseries are very small trivial miseries, & fundamentally I am the happiest woman in all Eng.d: the happiest wife, the happiest writer, the most liked inhabitant, so I say, in Tavistock Square. When I count up my blessings, they must surely amount to more than my sorrows; even when I have all these flies in my eyes.

Well, what am I going to have for dinner? And I will hardly try my new pen on this last page, ~~having~~ making it rapidly describe my complete innovation of domestic life—Ods, I didn't do it before: that I order dinner no longer; but write it in a book, & then put glass between me & Nelly.

Oh & George rang up this morning. A French couple who admire me: could I lunch: & my little he says, drop out, while I talk, while I eat, & they so preferred Brighton to Penshurst.

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May 28th

This is an odd summer, this one, unexampled perhaps in our history. We are going off to Cassis on Tuesday for a week. This is a revolution. We have never been abroad so late in the year I think. The Election will be over. We shall be governed by a Tory or a Labour party—Tory, I suppose.

For the benefit of posterity I may say that nobody pretends to know, with the exception of the candidates. They are all—even Hubert—confident. And I feel, rather oddly, that this is an important election. Walking down the Kings Road with Sidney Waterlow the other night—having been to dine at his club off a mahogany table surrounded by the portraits of statesmen—I had a cock tail, but no wine—& it was a thundery day—Leonard had a headache—& we sat in the ladies reception room—a ducks egg coloured room with globes of light sending their light up, not down—very cool, something like sitting inside smooth solid, something like sitting inside a shape of blanc mange—then said Sidney feeling that something must be done, Shall we Go & see the Sangers? It was a thing that

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one ought to do. It would give them such pleasure. And he bought me 3 bunches of violets at the door from a woman who said it was ~~the~~ her 40th wedding day: a tribute to my having once been asked in marriage by Sidney was it? — I held them in my hand all the evening, & we found the Sangers out; only a menial man came up from the basement. So we said we will call on the MacCarthys. And so it was that we walked along the Kings Road, talking about the Election. Sidney said that human nature has improved. We are all becoming gentler & wiser. Even the dogs are. One never sees a dog fight now he said, & sure enough the big mongrel trotted across the road very peacefully to sniff at the door of a public house. There the story stops. For I dont think much happened at the MacCarthys. One had to talk. I noticed nothing, I think. The memorable things happen when there is a great space of silence all round them perhaps. I dont know.

Now about this book, the Moths. How am I to begin it? And what is it to be? I feel no great impulse; no fever; only a great ~~weight~~ pressure of difficulty. Why write it then? Why write at all? Every morning I write a little sketch, to amuse myself.

I am not saying, I might say, that these

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sketches have any relevance — I am not trying to tell a story.
Yet perhaps it might be done in that way. A mind thinking.
They might be islands of light — islands in the stream
that I am trying to ~~[illegible]~~ convey: life itself going on.
The current of the moths flying strongly ~~this w~~
this way. A lamp & a flower pot in the centre. The
flower can always be changing. But there must
be more unity between each scene than I can find at
present. Autobiography it might be called.
How am I to make one lap, or act, between the coming
of the moths, more intense than another; if there are
only scenes? One must get the sense that this is
the beginning: this the middle; that the climax — when
she opens the window & the moth comes in.
I shall have the two different currents — the
moths flying along; the flower upright in the
centre; a perpetual crumbling & renewing of the
plant. In its leaves she might see things happen.
But who is she? I am very anxious that
she should have no name. I dont want a
Lavinia or a Penelope: I want 'She'. But
that becomes arty, Liberty, greenery yallery somehow:
symbolic in loose robes. Of course I can
make her think ~~back~~ backwards & forwards; I can
tell stories. But thats not it. Also I shall
do away with exact place & time. Anything may be
out of the window — a ship — a desert — London.

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Friday. 31st May

The oculist said to me this afternoon "Perhaps you're not as young as you were." This is the first time that has been said to me; & it seemed to me an astonishing statement. It means that one now seems to a stranger not a woman, but an elderly woman. Yet even so, though I felt wrinkled & aged for an hour, & put on a manner of great wisdom & toleration, buying a coat, even so, I forget it soon; & am 'a woman' again. Another light on my character & appearance — Coming up Southampton Row, a man grabbed me — then said stop; & made me pay 6d for a silly little damp film, which I did not want; nor did I want to stay talking politics to a ferrety little rascal, having had little lunch. But my face marked me for his ~~b~~ victim.

"We are winning" Nelly said at tea. I was shocked to think that we both desire the Labour party to win — why? partly that I dont want to be ruled by Nelly. I think to be ruled by Nelly — Lottie would be a disaster. ~~xx~~ This ~~doubt~~ Last night at Charleston we heard election results dribbled out. shaken very dismally in the drawing room. Driving home through Lewes there was not a single light downstairs. No one was even listening in. The streets were perfectly empty. One man was pumpshipping against the station wall. I had imagined a crowd, flares, shouts, white shats — only three black cats, not an happening with the mice. So

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we shall be ruled by labour.

Then went down to Worthing to see Leonard's mother, laid like an old & sore – rather lovely this time – in a narrow room; with the sea opposite. I watched the porpoises. Some reflections of people walking on the beach. And she cried; & was very dismal; & then rambled off about Caterham 50 years ago; the Stannards, ~~one~~ & how Herbert had rolled all the way down stairs, & drank so much milk that people were astonished. Nothing of life, as we see it, remains to her:– only this curious lit up page of the past, which she turns over & over lying in bed; & cant read or sleep, yet anxiously demands, does Leonard think she will get well? We had been saying driving down that one should take poison. She has every reason; & yet demands more life, more life, at 78. She scarcely; she cant walk; she is alone; she is looked after by nurses; lives in an hotel, but demands more life. One odd thing she said was that she had been kept with a governess as a child who had given her a terrible disease, & been expelled from Holland on that account. I fancy she had never told anyone this:– it was her offering of intimacy to us: I was a thanksgiving perhaps for our having come. I suppose moved by her, could hardly speak. I suppose human nature, so emotional, so irrational, so instinctive, a [illegible] in her, but not in me, has this beauty; this what they call 'Elemental' quality. One may get it too, when one is 76. One may lie [illegible], & yet cry

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doctor thinks I shall recover? One will not perhaps go to the writing table & write that simple & profound paper upon suicide which I see myself leaving for my friends. What a day it was — the sea flowing in & out of the ~~..~~ bays, all the way, like the Adriatic, or Pacific; & the sand yellow; & the ~~boat~~ boats ~~..~~ steaming along; & behind the downs like long waves, gently extending themselves, to break very gently; smooth & sloping like the waves. Even bungalows are all burnt up — made part of this beauty; made of cardboard not zinc. We voted at Rodmell. I saw a white gloved lady helping an old farm couple out of her Daimler. We have bought a motor lawn mower. I liked Francis last night. He is so abundant & foolish. So generous & warm hearted A most divers man — a man I adore — these phrases etc. And then he amused me with his imitation of Esther talking like Macaulay. When they read the results he was always talking so loud: & had to stop short. We called on a Lady Bar & left Pinka, & here we are again after one of those little journeys which seem to have lasted 500 years. Everything looks a little strange & symbolical when one comes back. I was in a queer mood, thinking myself very old: but now I am a woman again — as I always am when I write. This scattering & heartening this motoring about.

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Saturday June 15th:

Home last night from Cassis: that is today from Arles. The hottest holiday I have ever had. And in some ways different from others: partly that it was so hot: then that we were alone with Nessa & Duncan; then that I have become, almost, a landowner. A window owner, anyhow. Yes, I almost bought La Boudard (& am not sure of the spelling) & have a contract, to go there at the cost of £2-10 a month. And this means an infinite number of things—perhaps—complete change; as buying a house so often does. Already this morning I feel an attachment—my little island—floating some way off, but in my possession. And this island means heat, silence, complete aloofness from London: the sea; eating cakes in the new hotel at La Ciotat; driving off to Aix; sitting on the harbour dining, seeing the sardine boats come in; talk with people who have never heard of me & think me older, <u>inferior</u>, uglier ~~& inferior~~ than Nessa, & in every way inferior to her: that adds voluptuousness, yet edge; happy, free yet somehow restrained into some unity with Nessa & Duncan. It means also buying French books at Toulon & keeping them in my lovely cool room in the wood; Leonard in his shirt sleeves; an Eastern private life for us; an Indian summer running on to the end of this book; a great deal of light of common day; cheap wine & cigars; new alliances, with Currys, Cruthers, & other anomalous oddities—all this my engagement to make three windows at Boudard means to me.

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I forget what the limits of your stay were. We were there for a week, coming the day before they expected us, oddly enough as we did last year. There was Duncan in his blue shirt; Angelica — Judith doing lessons on the terrace. Nessa drove Mrs Campbell into the town & brought up the food every morning. I wrote a letter at an article on Cowper, but letting the words write difficultly in the heat surrounded by black & white butterflies. And L. & I were very extravagant, for the first time in our lives, buying desks, tables, sideboards, crockery for Rodmell. This gave me pleasure; & set my dander up against Nessa's almost overpowering supremacy. My elder son is coming tomorrow; yes, & he is the most promising young man in King's; & has been speaking at the Apostles dinner. All I can oppose that with is, And I made £2,000 out of Orlando & can bring Leonard here & buy a house & servant. To which she replies (in the same strange inaudible way) I am a failure as a painter compared with you. I cant do more than buy looming models. And so we go on; over the ditches of our childhood. Do you remember going down to the town to fetch — (3) which ancient memories Duncan can not share. He was divinely charming; & praised Nessa too. I put in these after-thoughts of feeling so that one may compare the salad, & am now running out to get my books from [illegible].